



The Ancient Home of the Slavs

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Source: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 25, No. 65 (Apr., 1947), pp. 356-372

Published by: the [Modern Humanities Research Association](#) and [University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4203859>

Accessed: 12/06/2014 18:45

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THE ANCIENT HOME OF THE SLAVS ¹

THE grim experiences of recent years have put before us the necessity for a revision of our relation as a people to the Slav world. The fact of our belonging to it has for a long time played no rôle either in our political or our cultural life. From Russia we were separated by an abyss that was dug by the short-sighted policy of the St. Petersburg government, which up to the days of Alexander III continued under the overpowering influence of Berlin, and regarded itself as the legitimate heir of the Byzantine empire. One must admit that we ourselves by our Insurrections helped in a marked degree to direct Russia into this channel. Up to 1830-1831 Nicholas I thought of himself as King of Poland, and even may have thought at first of reconstructing Poland. In any case he regarded Prussia as an antagonist and weighed the possibility of a trial of arms, desiring to be a superior factor in settling German affairs.

From the Slavs of Austria we were separated by the clever policy of the Vienna government—the successor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation; and in the Balkans we bore the consequences of peculiar imponderables stemming from our traditional friendship with Turkey—something that was doubtless not as costly (as it was less sentimental) as that with Hungary. For the latter seriously burdened our relations with the Slavs. One remembers how Karol Libelt, on his way to the First Congress of the Slavs in Prague in that revolutionary “spring-time” of 1848, stopped over in Budapest to appease the Hungarians, who were at that moment fiercely hurt by this demonstration of Slavonic togetherness, so greatly affecting their own position.

Only the provinces ruled by Prussia, absorbed by their struggle with the Germans, were never in the position which forced other Poles to any rivalry with their Slav cousins. Their life had, however, a too specialist character to be a deciding force in the shaping of our general relations with our neighbours. For them, apart from anxiety for preserving the national heritage, the main concern was the saving of Silesia and of the Masurian Poles of East Prussia; which meant the winning of those still politically unconscious populations for the Polish state-idea as being an indispensable element in the humdrum life of the wage-earner.

In consequence of this condition of affairs, we lost from our

¹ Polish original in *Problemy* (Sept., 1946).

cultural existence the feeling of union with the Slav world ; and the hopeless reality of our life under the Partitions was governed by the grotesque phrase that we were nothing more or less than " the Frenchmen of the north." It was often repeated in our homes, and people mostly did not realise that it was an act of subordination which did us little credit. What was worse, it brought in its train certain humiliations. The French, dreaming of revenge, and disturbed by the growing power of Germany, prostrated themselves before Russia and did not show at all an excess of sentiment towards a sort of poor relation. The fact is that, with the utilitarian rationalism of the Third Republic, which replaced old-time courtesy by realism, the French authorities looked on us as Russians, Germans or Austrians. In this, for that matter, there was no illwill. I have myself been a witness of how a French journalist, and therefore an educated man in his way, at a dinner given by Paderewski during the Peace Conference in Paris, declared to a Pole who was explaining things to him, "*Maintenant je comprend tout. Les Polonais russes parlent russe, les Polonais allemands—parlent allemand, mais quelle langue parlent les Polonais autrichiens ?*"

Overcome and depressed as we are by the gigantic dimensions of the cataclysm we have just lived through, we should not however forget the old and tried truth that the present is the sequel to the past. Reckoning with it by no means demands of us that we should not rightly esteem acts of creative initiative ; but this on the other hand dare not blind us in assessing experienced realities. Realising that the present represents the resultant of these two chief factors, we must be aware that, for the finding of our way amid the very tangled problems of the present, it is not enough to say lamely that as a result of the war just ended we find ourselves once more in a situation very like the one we were in at the end of the 10th century. We were forced at that time to wage the bitterest wars with the Germans, who threatened the foundations of our existence ; and then, as now, disposed of enormous material resources. Nor should one forget a fact often too little understood, that we were linked with the Scandinavian peoples by the closest of ties—peoples which are today also deeply concerned for our survival. It was only much later that we got into a conflict with them (of a dynastic character), which led to the complete exhaustion of both parties and handed down only one heritage to posterity—the brilliant pages of battles fought at Kirckholm, Częstochowa and Warsaw, clouded later by Narwa and Poltava.

Properly to treat of Polish relations with the Slav world, we

have to go back even further into the past than the crowning of the first Polish King with Papal sanction and with the approval of the Emperor. This significant date in history was a culminating point in the growth of our statehood, which unfolded from the mists of pre-historic times as a creation capable of withstanding successfully the most powerful force in Europe—that of the Holy Roman Empire. An achievement of these dimensions must have been the crowning act of a long period of serious creative work, and of stern conflicts—both within and without the land. In all probability these went on during the times of the differentiation of Slavonic stocks, which originally had constituted a single closely-knit racial unity, as we can see from its older culture, mirrored in the various Slavonic tongues of today.

In the days of Bolesław the Brave the Slavs occupied extensive areas of the continent, possessing at the same time the consciousness that in much of this area they were relatively recent arrivals. Some of them even remembered whence they had come. For example, the Serbs could point quite tangibly to the northern slopes of the Carpathians as the mother-land of “White Serbia”; while of the Radywicze and the Viatycze it was known that they “are of Lechish stock”—as the Kiev annuals reveal. This rather ambiguous mention has been explained by researches into place-names as meaning that they came from Podlasie.

On the other hand no proper account was taken of the nature of the early relations existing between the various component parts of the whole Slav family of peoples. None of them laid claim to primacy because it held sway over an age-old motherland of the Slavonic world. It would seem as though this matter belonged already to history, which had been blotted from memory by the mighty changes of later times. We know, for that matter, that the invasion of the Huns brought about important shiftings of the areas inhabited by the Slavs, and they could not take place without serious internal strife. One may then conjecture that a second coming-together of the eastern with the western Slavs followed, and that the forcing of some of the latter across the Elbe came as a result of the Hun's onslaught. At that time, also, the ancestors of the south Slavs withdrew from the shelter of the Carpathians, passing in part beyond their ranges, and soon beginning their wanderings in the direction of the Balkans. As is known, these movements have been interpreted by German specialists as an invasion of Slavs who had only recently arrived from Asia.

It is doubtless true that present-day claims to priority of

indigeneity which are not justified by living tradition are less relevant than such claims could be in the days of the first Piasts ; nevertheless an objective statement as to what land was the original home of the Slavs and which of the modern nations is the legitimate holder of the mother-country cannot be dismissed as a purely theoretical manœuvre, wholly innocent of significance for appraising the realities of the present. Is it not the case that in the last fifty years great play has been made of the consciousness that the ancient home of the Germanic peoples was Scandinavia, while the cradle of the Anglo-Saxons has been England ? Does such a consciousness not decide the re-dividing into separate nationalities (or states) of the whole body of immigrants admitted to the promised land of the U.S.A. ? Do not the Jews make capital in this way of their national credit based on the Scriptures ? Do not the Italians of today, far as they are from the spirit of ancient and eternal Rome, reap substantial material and moral advantages for the fact that while once they destroyed her monuments now they have become the protectors of the same ?

It will obviously not do to undervalue the fact that over the body of history hangs geography. One may take a very critical view of the outmoded and extremely nationalist opinions of Buckle and of the anthropological theses of Ratzel ; yet it cannot be denied that only the continuity of the geographical factor in history can explain why we can affirm a striking regularity of forces when we observe any larger land area in the longer perspective of time. The perspective of the last 1,000 years is enough to justify the view that political frontiers in Europe show changes which upset our contemporaries only because the latter do not realise that they are looking at a fluctuation of things which in reality have a shape which has been determined for a very long time. On the other hand, when we visualise the fact that graver dislocations of racial frontiers are bound up with the incursions from Asia of nomad peoples, flooding the boundless plainlands of south-eastern Europe, we are driven to an even deeper perspective, taking us into the dawn of history. Finally, if we realise that the centre which sent out the great mass of European peoples, moving for the most part in an eastern direction, lay on the diluvial lowland of central Europe, and that these masses, after entering on agricultural habits skirted the great plain (*taiga*) which covered the north-east of our continent, we are driven back on the pre-history that has been made known by the archæologists. Only in that breadth and depth of perspective do we discern that three great events in the history of Europe had

a similar course, and with each time a lesser swing of the pendulum—a fact that witnesses an advancing stabilisation of conditions. These have been :—

1. The expansion of the Indo-European peoples, dating from the turn of the third millenium B.C. ;
2. the great expansion of the Slavs, attaining a mighty dynamic at the middle of the first millenium of our era ;
3. the expansion of the Polish state, which broke down in the middle of the 17th century.

The striking similarity in their course of these three historical processes (of very different dimensions) reveals beyond doubt the overriding influence of the geographical environment on the surrounding landscape. Being something permanent, it must provide the basis of our own efforts to foretell the future.

It is true that the formulating of expectations in the realm of sociological phenomena has been up to now a thankless task, and it is hard to suppose that it will be otherwise in the future : nevertheless people of an age of planning cannot get on without it. Such speculation brings into their rather colourless life a certain ideological content, making possible an unusually lush unloading of energy. Bearing this in mind one can hardly suppose that the Slav world can remain indifferent to these questions : Where was the centre that sent out the first waves of this expansion, covering at the present time one-seventh of the inhabited globe ? Where do we meet the shallow ripples of the periphery, perhaps by their barren substratum condemned to a life of passivity ? Not less stirring must be the answer to the questions : Did that original centre preserve its biological fitness, and in what relation does its vitality stand to those new focus points which arose on foreign ground, in the field of its expansion ? In what degree and direction can all this affect the further course of this fantastic process, which shakes today the foundations of the world ?

THE VITALITY OF EUROPE'S POLITICAL FRONTIERS

To get an idea of the permanent character of the frontiers of European states, which bears witness to their vitality and the long-since attained stabilisation of their fundamental framework, it suffices to take a look at the map. This will make clear to us above all what interests us most, that our present day Third Republic presents a territorial restoration of Poland under Bolesław the Brave in the year A.D. 1000. The gains of the centuries in between are limited to the Masurian Lake district, a strip of Podlasie, the lands

between the Wieprz and the Bug, Posnia [*sic*], the area between the Bobr and the western Neisse and the south-western border of Silesia, disputed by the Czechs. In comparison with the gigantic outreach of our neighbour on the east, these are obviously trivial. We can comfort ourselves only with the thought that lands, which are so long stabilised, are not threatened by such frequent and great catastrophes, of the sort that must shake more fluid and expanding colonial empires, which are less adapted to natural conditions.

The most outstanding example of the elasticity of European frontiers is undoubtedly seen in the way the German undertaking, under the leadership of a demented demagogue, to try the adventure of conquering the Slav world by fire and sword, as though it was a new Mexico or Peru, has ended with the loss of all the gains won from the Slavs since the days of Charlemagne. That mighty monarch of western Europe made on the Slavs so unheard-of an impression that his name became the term for a ruler. It can be found in Slavonic languages as *Krół*, *Korol* or *Kral*, and reveals their division into three parts. Only the Bulgarians, who remained within the range of direct and intensive Byzantine influences, held faithfully to tradition and handed on the title tsar (= Cæsar) to Moscow. The rest of the Slavs shaped their lives in the reflection of Charlemagne's fame, and right here can be seen their relationship with the west.

Only in this long perspective do we see the true measure of the defeat sustained by the Germans. It may sound like a paradox, yet it is a fact that this catastrophe has to a large degree been caused by the German failure to recognise one truth: all their seemingly lasting gains were owed to a consistent peace-time policy, whose last stage (before the Partitions) was the holding in fief of Leborg and Bytow,² which provided so many officers for the army of Frederic the Great. In the course of long centuries our western border was not less peaceful than the southern, which suffered only from bandit raids of the Highlanders. After the successes won by the Piast Kings in the west there reigned a long-time peace. Fighting prevailed only in the north—with the Teutonic Knights; and these wars, in which the German Empire would not be involved, ended with their complete humiliation. The whole stake was lost to us later on during generations of peace!

An even higher degree of stabilisation in regard to frontier can be seen in the case of Bohemia. This is explained by the nature of

² The formerly German towns of Lauenburg and Bütow, near the 1919-1939 German-Polish frontier in Pomerania.

the landscape, which forced on the country inflexible frontiers ; with the obvious exceptions of the Moravian Gate which lay on the great transit route and became the scene of age-long border conflicts between Poles and Czechs. Similarly disputed fringes are to be seen today in the areas adjoining the Sudeten passes lying farther to the north.

The historical frontiers of Slovakia, threatened for more than a thousand years by the Hungarians, became in good part stabilised, thanks to the temporary overlordship of that country by Bolesław the Brave. It was he who worked out the frontier between Slovaks and Magyars, driving in iron posts, the memory of which lived until recent times in the village taverns around Budapest. We used to hear of all this from our own Highlanders who would cross the border into Hungary before 1914 looking for work. The territorial gains of the Slovaks during a millenium are limited to a small area lying between their earlier eastern borders and the western frontier of Carpathian Ruthenia, as established by the Peace Conference in 1919. The original population there may have been Poles, coming from the northern slopes of the mountain range. The Ruthenian (Ukrainian) elements, which were numerous there until recently, represent a later infiltration, linked up by kinship with the wave of Wallachian settlement which had come originally from the borders of Albania, reached along the Carpathians as far as the river Morawa, and gave so much live colour to our own Highland counties.

The influence exercised on the South Slavs by the conquest of Charlemagne, to which they owed their deliverance from the particularly cruel yoke of the Turkish (or perhaps Mongolian) Avars, can best be visualised in the relations that obtain even today in Yugoslavia. Those who did not come under the Frankish monarchy remained Serbs, while those of Serb origin who did were transformed into Croats—inimical to the Serbs and used by the Hungarians and Germans against their fellow-nationals. They spoke the same tongue, but were distinguished from the Serbs by their faith, and formed in time a separate nation with a name that links them to their faraway cradle-home in the Carpathians—known in Polish as Chrobacja. Having just escaped the Turkish onmarch, substantial numbers of Serbs crossed the ancient fringe of the Empire of Charlemagne and settled in western Bosnia, or even (in lesser numbers) in Dalmatia. There there arose scattered regions with a mixed population ; and their severe differences facilitated the overlordship both of the Turks and of their later successors and heirs.

In wholly other circumstances the Croatians crossed this great historical frontier to the north of the Danube obviously in an eastern direction. Settled by the Austrians on this "military borderland," they kept guard over the Turkish fringes of the Habsburg possessions. These "Frontiersmen" became a formation analogous to Poland's registered Cossacks, but were held in the iron discipline of the Austrian regular army. Fortunately for present-day Yugoslavia, they did not absorb so much Turkish blood as the Cossacks absorbed Tartar; and they repaid in full their debt to the Habsburg, conscientiously forgiving Vienna the ingratitude of its "springtime moods" in 1848.

In the South Slav world the Serbs distinguished themselves by the maximum of resiliency. To them fell the task of organising Greater Serbia, which was called Yugoslavia, on political grounds. This new state, uniting Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, is linked up none-the-less by tradition with the Kingdom of Stephen Dušan the Strong, in view of its great territorial claims in the Balkans. It is still wrestling with internal difficulties—the consequences of the vitality of the frontiers set by the Frankish Emperor. The political wisdom of the Slovenes has not yet availed to compose these differences. The latter have been severely tested by a thousand years of conflict with the Germans, as well as by Italian pressure, which, under the rule of a Fascist Mussolini, attained a doubly barbaric tension. It suffices to recall the letter of this epigone of the Great and Eternal Rome, written in 1930 to four young Italians. It honoured them as heroes, their merit being that they offered themselves as hangmen in order to carry out a death-sentence on some Slovenes from Istria, condemned for nationalist activity. The Slovenes are the South Slav "opposite-number" of the Western Slavs of Lusatia.

The age-long rivals of the Serbs in the Balkans, the Bulgarians—at one time the most cultured Slavonic people—were organised politically by a Turkish tribe, to whom they owe their name. They are the kinsmen of the Chuvash people from the Volga, and have not closed the last thousand years of their history too happily. Thanks to very direct relation with Byzantium, the Bulgarians played a great part in this history of written Slavonic and have counted for much in the history of the Russian literary language. Their political history has been splendid, but much less happy. Above all, the nation was so exhausted by its wars with Byzantium and so terribly destroyed by centuries of Turkish rule that in spite of great moral fibre (all efforts to "levantise" them failed!), they

did not regain their ancient domain of a thousand years ago, and in recent decades have lost extensive areas to the Serbs, Roumanians and Greeks. Having defeated the Turks in the Balkan War (with the Serbs and Greeks to help them) they were then beaten by a coalition of their two allies. In consequence of this they had to give up Macedonia—the cradle of Bulgarian literature. The greater part went to the Serbs, who long ago had become possessors of the fringes of Timok and Pirot, but they had to give up the Dobruja to the Roumanians. The lands lying north of the Danube, at one time populated by the Bulgars, which reach even to Buda-Pesth (as the name of the capital shows) were lost for ever to the Roumanians and Hungarians. After the first World War, the Bulgarians suffered the consequences of their alliance with the Central Powers, based on a hatred of the Serbs and the desire for revenge, and even lost to the Greeks their outlet to the Aegean. At the present time, actuated by the same motives, they have made the same mistake, and they are waiting for Divine mercy. Up to a point they are saved from further territorial losses by the nature of the landscape. But they have not resurrected the ancient Bulgaria of Tsar Simeon, which in any case was but a passing creation.

Of eastern Europe, generally regarded as a highly fluid *terrain*, and thought of as still far from the state of ripe crystallisation which marks the Europe based on Latin foundations, we can thus affirm a heterogeniety that is already significantly established. In its eastern areas we must reckon with the fact that analogous organising work was done by the Polish-Lithuanian state, which in the time of its greatest outreach represented precisely a sphere of colonial expansion for the older Poland of Bolesław the Brave. In this direction that leader undertook his first expeditions, when he went to Kiev. For just this reason the nearer east of Central Europe must be viewed in the perspective of the height of power wielded by the Polish-Lithuanian organism at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries.

When we make this chronological shift, we see one thing standing out: this remotest outreach of the Byzantine Empire in Europe reveals the highest level of territorial stability in the area most disturbed by incursions of nomadic herdsmen from Asia—the Ukraine. This can probably be explained by the fact that it lay nearest to its spiritual cradle. Doubtless, as a result, cultural life developed here earliest and most richly. When we have this in mind, we realise why the frontiers of the Ruthenian lands belonging

to the Polish Crown, to be found along the Bug and the San, agree almost exactly with the present frontier between Poland and the U.S.S.R. The northern boundary of the Ukraine establishes the condition of things attained by the Union of Lublin (1569); while the eastern only slightly extends beyond our boundary of 1619 and the southern reaches to the sea. It therefore only corrects the negligence of our forebears, who made light of the question of outreach to the Black Sea, closed by the Turks; and who (what was worse) were not able to deal with the Crimean Tartars, destroyers by their forays of our south-eastern border-lands.

In respect of the provinces of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the one-time territories of the Teutonic Knights (Courland and Inflanty) which were held in joint control by the Duchy and the Polish Crownland, the situation was quite different. Here there followed a turnover—the consequence of the nationality principle, which was set up for the Ukrainians by the Lublin Union (1569) and completed in our own day. The former lands of the Knights, a bone of contention at one time between Poland and Sweden, got their national status sealed by the Paris Conference in 1919. On the other hand, the defining of a White Russian republic meant the marking off of the remotest area of Byzantine outreach from a regional with a decided leaning towards Latin civilisation in Lithuania. In this connection it is noteworthy that from the language point of view Bělorussia represented originally part of the Great-Russian area, which in time under the influence of Polish culture was separated off to such an extent that we witness the creation of a distinct White Russian nationality, with its own political identity. The evolution of Bělorussia thus follows the same road taken longer ago by the Dutch. The closer unity of the Bělorussians with the Great Russians is mirrored, moreover, in the fact that the frontier of the Soviet Bělorussia has been withdrawn in the east very far by comparison with that of the Grand Duchy in 1619. In this respect Bělorussia differs greatly from the Ukraine, which has even gone beyond the 1619 frontier; and precisely in the east—a fact bearing witness both to the greater dynamic of the Ukrainians and to their more crystallised national consciousness.

The consideration that only an ethnographic frontier is today regarded as a just one permits the assertion that again, as at Westphalia three centuries ago, we have found ourselves in the process of arranging a peace that closes what is this time more than thirty years of war. This peace is again to realise the principle *cujus regio ejus religio*. The Balkan War put an end to the Turkish

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domination in Slav and Greek lands, as well as in the wild mountains of Albania. Then came the first World War, which cleared up the matter of the Southern Tyrol and the ruler of the Habsburgs over their many-tongued Monarchy (a relict of the Holy Roman Empire of German nation), but did not complete the task of cleaning-up that Empire's overgrown Prussian offspring. These two wars were cataclysmic stages of the great historic process we are discussing.

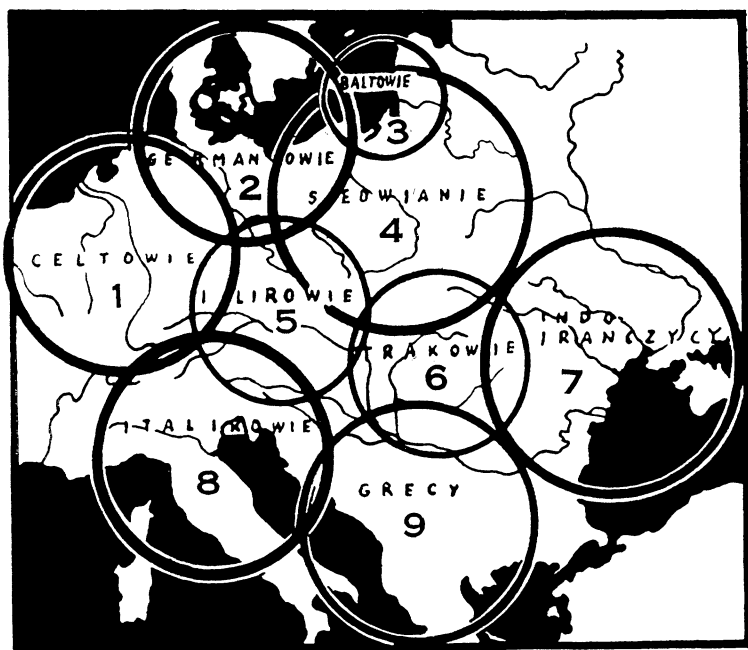
The whole difference between the almost mediæval remoteness of the Peace of Westphalia and the very modern reality of today is found in the fact that the place of religious faith, said to represent submission to "mouldy prejudices," has been taken today by nationality, closely affiliated with confession and much harder to define objectively. What has happened is the result of replacing the clergy, preaching their sermons, by "the enlightened journalists," conditioning their flock—who are self-conscious and free citizens, with the help of the printed word. In the name of this new reality, there are taking place again, as of old, movements of people who will not conform—but this time on grounds of nationality instead of their faith. The present-day movements are carried out more humanely than in the days when the Turks expelled the Armenians; for we have at our disposal railways and motor-cars, which could have made the carrying out of the decisions of the Treaty of Westphalia still more humane. The other side of this having improved transport is that people began to migrate almost with the outbreak of war, without in the least taking thought for its outcome; with the consequence that countless millions have travelled "there and back again," marking the course of their wanderings with a thick line of graves and crosses. All this signifies not so much an act of sabotage as a biological protest against this newest realisation of the rights of man—that solemnly proclaimed and most splendid conquest of the French Revolution, which is the universally honoured Mother of the rationalist and (we must confess) not too humane reality of the presens.

THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE SLAVS

The above-mentioned facts suffice to show that the Western Slav world lies in the zone of-frontiers on our continent that have been settled first in order. This permits us to reckon with the possibility that the cradle of the race was there, and that from it flowed the first waves of expansion. This is a far more likely thing than any effort to place that cradle in areas which only began to enter into a phase of stabilisation in the last centuries of our historical

consciousness. True, as science stands today, we do not have to base the matter of the original home of the Slavs on purely academic deductions. The researches of the last decades have provided us with a large body of concrete facts, not to be questioned, and they have made the problem of that home a field of relatively exact inductions. We shall set them forth briefly.

Above all, one must note the fact that the territorial relations of the Indo-European peoples in the early historical period correspond



The Scheme of J. Schmidt and H. Hirt, relative to the kinship of the Indo-European languages, superimposed on the map of Europe by Tadeusz Sulimirski (Cracow).

KEY: 1. the Celts; 2. the Germans; 3. the Balts; 4. The Slavs; 5. the Illyrians; 6. the Traks; 7. the Indo-Iranians; 8. the Italians; 9. the Greeks.

to their linguistic kinships. This immensely far-reaching fact, to which I drew attention long ago, has been brought out by Tadeusz Sulimirski, who laid over the map of Europe the old diagram of Johannes Schmidt, accepted unreservedly by Hermann Hirt and the distinguished German linguists. It concerns itself with the kinships of the Indo-European languages.

This agreement, so graphically brought to the eye by Sulimirski, of the dispersal of people in the early historical period with their linguistic kinship, bears eloquent witness to the fact that the

differentiation of Indo-European tongues (at least of their European branch) must have taken place *in* Europe. The picture of the early historical dispersal of Indo-European peoples is given in the map attached. It is the older concept of Hirt, but modified above all in regard to the placing of the ancient home of the Slavs, which is here given on the basis of work done by our prehistorians. This has led to the agreement mentioned above. What is more, the outreach of the Traks was extended to the Dnieper, as demanded by the newest Slavonic discoveries.

In view of the above-mentioned proofs that the differentiation of the European branch of the Indo-European family of languages must have happened in Europe, one must conclude that the common vocabulary, recalling a primitive shepherd life on the open steppes (lying perhaps in Asia), must come from an older period preceding both the arrival of the Indo-Europeans in the area inhabited in early historical times *and* the date of differentiation. It is beyond doubt, that only now did they go over to a settled economy, for their common agricultural terminology is limited to the European branch.

We have further evidence of very great weight on this point. Grammatical peculiarities of the Indo-European languages point to the fact that the Germanic, Slavonic and Baltic tongues belong to the quite distinct northern group, and that originally a closer link existed between the two former. Only later did there arise the closer connection between the German and the Baltic tongues, which can be seen from the dictionary. Obviously the Slavonic and Baltic languages form a closely united group. As for the Illyrian language, it would be well on the other hand to reckon with the possibility that it belonged originally to the western group, and only later transferred to the northern.

Slavonic botanical terms point to the region of the Vistula, together with the part of the Oder basin adjacent to it as the hypothetical original home of the Slavs. If we could confirm the names of the plants common to the Slavs—plants that formerly were known only in the east, we should have a sort of linguistic trace of a very early and enduring march of the Slavs westward. This would be an all-Slav analogy to the early historical movements of the Eastern Slavs, withdrawing before the incursions of Asiatic peoples from the Black Sea steppes.

The ancient home of the Slavs occupies the larger part of the area of prehistoric Lusatian civilisation—a point already noted by our first authorities in this field, Józef Kostrzewski and Leon Kościowski. In view of the fact that on the plain of Central Europe

we have only two cultural units, the Germanic and the Lusatian, reaching as far back as the bronze age, and since we are unable to tie the Slavs to the German unit because of the close and age-old kingship of the Slavs with the Germans, we are compelled to link up our Slav forefathers to a people whose cremated remains have been preserved in our cemeteries of the Lusatian type, and whose fortress-homes were destroyed by the onmarch of the Scythians. Biskupin is the one happy exception, permitting us to get a clear idea of the high level of material being of this people.

The Slav expansion of the early historical period, about which we know both from mediæval writers and (still more) from the cemeteries left by it, was anthropologically speaking one of the people possessing the traits of the well-grown, fair-haired, blue-eyed Nordics. It did not differ in this respect from the two former waves of expansion—German and primitive Celtic. It must therefore have started from the diluvial plain of Central Europe, or from lands immediately adjacent to it. It could not have come either from Scandinavia or the Black Sea steppes, for the primitive Slavs had too little admixture of the Mediterranean race in their veins. We thus see that the unquestionable consequences of researches in speech, botany, pre-history and anthropology, taken together, agree that one can place the early home of the Slavs in the area that is relatively identical with that of the Poland of the Piasts.

In harmony with this we have the notable fact that precisely here is to be found the one truly fairly dense centre of population in the diluvial plain. It included a larger area, and was surrounded by the empty fringes of Zabuż, the Masurian Lakes, Pomerania, Lubusland (at the junction of the Oder and the Warta—*tr. note*) and the ranges of the Sudeten and Carpathian mountains. This same centre is the area of the greatest natural increase (of population) on the continent. To its dynamic force we owe thanks for the fact that today, after the Anglo-Saxons, Irish and Germans, the Poles represent the most numerous nationality element in the U.S.A. Only so can we explain why, by contrast with almost all the other nations visited by this war of extermination, we emerge from it virtually without a diminution of the number of Poles living in their homeland. In 1939 there were just under 23,000,000 Poles in Poland. There will be at least as many today when repatriation from the east is completed.¹ The Poles who formerly in their western

¹ Tr. Note.—The figure given for 1939 is obviously meant not to include any Polish citizens of Jewish blood. The figures for the present are a good deal below the official estimates, which reach 24,000,000.

borderlands were condemned to denationalisation are matched today by those abroad, who are not returning home. It is clear that this human volcano, which threw up waves of expansion in the early historical period, is still active today, providing a mass of seasonal workers and emigrants engaged in the west. Its power presents us with one of our greatest demographic enigmas.

These facts from the field of demography favour the ancient home of the Slavs we suggest. True, they have not the same force of proof as those mentioned earlier; yet it is much more probable that the more densely populated areas with their greater dynamic can be accepted, rather than the empty fringes like Polesie as German authorities desire, wishing to push the Slavs out of central Europe, even at the cost of commonsense. As for Polesie, thanks to Sulimirski's work we know that, though inhabited in the remoter past, it later became a complete desert, only again to begin to be inhabited at the end of the Roman period—which means at the time of full Slavonic expansion. This assertion explains to us the Slavonic nature of Polesian geographical terms, used (by the Germans—*tr. note*) to make that area the ancient home. We may pass over the changing conditions of Polesie mentioned already, due no doubt to the fluctuations of its marshiness (itself dependent on the climatic changes which can be seen from examining the peat); but we must affirm that in the adjacent regions of Central Europe stable conditions have prevailed for a very long time. For example, the investigations of K. Moszynski have proved that the ethnographic fringe, which marks the delimitation of various kinds of tools and utensils used by the common people, runs east of the Vistula, and is identical with the border-line of Lusatian civilisation. Stanisław Lencewicz has shown, moreover, that this is the limit of the desert that once covered north-eastern Europe. There is no doubt that we have to do here with a living trace of the frontier that marked the eastern border of the ancient home of the Slavs.

ANALOGIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

In the light of the facts given above, we cannot escape the observation that Slavonic expansion was an analogous phenomenon to the Anglo-Saxon expansion of the past four hundred years, on which we are well informed. The essential difference between the two lies above all in this, that the former began fifteen centuries earlier, and that its course is to a high degree veiled by the mists of pre-history. A second, no doubt less relevant, difference lies in the fact that Anglo-Saxon expansion was effected by sea (like all

the outreaches of the Germanic peoples), while that of the Slavs is the classic example of the land expansion of an agricultural population. In emphasising this outreach by sea we draw the conclusion that the Germans are not typically Germanic in this respect, but the continental illegitimate children of that race—the exact opposite of the Dutch. True, one could say that the creation of the Hansa towns was the offspring of the proper Germanic urge in them.

Present-day Slav reality, which provides us with the results of a process fifteen hundred years older than Anglo-Saxon expansion, must obviously represent a later phase, in its way projected much farther. This is seen above all in the already notable differentiation of the Slavonic languages. In the case of the Anglo-Saxons this kind of thing is scarcely noticeable, and it is checked today by a common literary language. The Slav people, though not so isolated from one another in space, are more clearly defined ethnical individualities than are the various Anglo-Saxon units.

We must ascribe it to time, as the factor that shapes reality, in a past when writing was unknown—that same time which used to play a more far-reaching part than it does in an age of civilisation, that we are not quite conscious of the following comparison. Poland, generically, occupies in regard to the Slavonic world an analogous position to that occupied by England among Anglo-Saxons. Obviously the chronological factor is not the only reason why the thesis seems a paradox, that the Pole is to the Russian what the Englishman is to the American. Beyond doubt a serious complication has been introduced into this rather simple relation by the fact that British culture has expanded on the virgin areas of the American continent, swallowing up a considerable population akin to it from central and northern Europe; while Russian has spread out its forces over the endless plains of Eurasia, assimilating far less of foreign elements, but subject to greater changes and assuming an ever-growing predominance over the rest of the Slavs. The relations of Poles and Russians have, moreover, become more complicated by the fact that the two peoples, though territorial neighbours, matured their traditions as adjuncts respectively of the two parts of the Roman Empire—the Latin and the Byzantine.

None-the-less, what seems to us a paradox is a very real fact: and the recent war which with unusual violence has broken the shells of moulded convictions and age-long prejudices, has uncovered the very marrow of that seeming paradox. In this same great catastrophe, in which, for the price of bases that in reality though

not explicitly have rendered Britain helpless, the U.S.A. have stood on her side and saved her from a second Hastings, Russia has on her part made possible for us the recovery of our real western frontiers, lost in the 12th century, and has stood on guard by them, staking all her prestige as a great power.

With these facts, even if they reach in part into a wholly forgotten past, we must reckon as we proceed to a revision of the problem of our relation as Poles to the Slav world. What is more, we dare not forget that for the west, in spite of Vienna (1683), the defence of London, Tobruk and the capture of Monte Cassino, being Slavs we Poles are a second-class nation, or even a third.

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